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ABSTRACT

This booklet from the Alaska Department of Education describes stages in babies' and young children's growth and development and suggests ways parents can support their children's development process. The information is divided into the following age ranges: (1) prenatal; (2) birth to 4 weeks; (3) 1 to 3 months; (4) 3 to 6 months; (5) 6 to 9 months; (6) 9 to 12 months; (7) 12 to 18 months; (8) 18 to 24 months; (9) 2 to 3 years; (10) 3 to 4 years; and (11) 4 to 5 years. For each age range, a summary paragraph introduces the information, followed by a listing, with explanation, of behaviors parents can expect from their child at that age. Sidebars contain "Tips and Things To Watch For" and "Notes on Brain Development." (EV)

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On the Threshold

HOW YOUR CHILD DEVELOPS

BIRTH TO FIVE YEARS

ED 434 765

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

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A MESSAGE FROM THE COMMISSIONER

Children learn about themselves, their world, their language, and their culture long before they go to school. They learn these things from their parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, brothers, sisters and others who take care of them. These people are children's first teachers.

We now know that a child's early experiences – from birth to age five – provide the foundation for future learning. Safe, supportive homes and loving families and caregivers make that foundation solid and positive, giving the child the mental, physical and emotional tools needed for success in school and in later life.

This booklet, *On the Threshold*, describes some of the things children do and describes ways you can support their growth and development. The booklet includes a few notes on the development of the brain, because of the importance of brain development during the first five years of life. The positive experiences and love and care you show your child in the early years support healthy brain development. This will ultimately contribute to your child doing well in school and later in life.

Sincerely,

Richard S. Cross
Alaska Commissioner of Education

Alaska Department of Education

Important Note

Not all children grow and develop in exactly the same way or at the same rate. Your child may do some things sooner or later than what is listed in this booklet. Remember to trust your instincts and feelings. See a health professional if you have any questions about your child's growth, development or health. You can write down important telephone numbers for your nurse, clinic, doctor or other health professionals in the place provided in the back of this booklet.

PRENATAL

A child's personality, behavior, and ability to learn begin to develop long before birth. From the beginning of the pregnancy, everything that affects the mother may have an effect on the developing baby. Because of this, it is important to do these things if you are expecting a baby:

- Go to the clinic, nurse, doctor, midwife, or other health care professional as soon as you think you might be pregnant.
- Avoid all alcohol, tobacco, and drugs that could damage the developing baby. Avoid second-hand smoke.
- Eat a variety of foods from the basic food groups. Try to maintain a healthy balanced diet.
- Try to stay calm and happy and avoid emotional upsets as much as you can.
- Rest when you feel tired. Sleep at least 8 hours a night.
- If you have other children, help them get ready for the new baby. Talk about the new baby, the kinds of things the baby will do, and what the baby might look like. Make sure other children in the family know how important it is to be careful with the baby. Tell them some things they will be able to do to help the new baby and you, once the new baby comes. Let them help you get things ready for the new baby.
- If you will be riding in a car, make sure you have a car seat for bringing the new baby home. If you will be traveling by boat, snowmachine, or ATV, make plans for how to travel safely with a tiny baby.
- Enjoy thinking about and planning for your new baby - and don't forget to take care of yourself, too!

BIRTH TO FOUR WEEKS

The newborn baby spends most of his or her time sleeping. At first, he seems small and helpless. At one month, he has better muscle tone, but needs his head supported when he is lifted, held or carried. Vision develops early, so provide lots of variety and new things to look at. He will know his parents by their smell and the sounds of their voices. It is important to start talking, reading, and singing to him right from the start.

Sleeps a lot.
Make sure baby is on his back on a firm mattress or surface to sleep. Doctors have found that this helps keep babies safe from SIDS (crib death.)

When awake and placed on his tummy, he can just barely lift his nose to turn his face from side to side.
Change baby's position from time to time when he is awake so his view of the world changes and he has opportunities to develop his muscles.

Notes On Brain Development

- *The first three years of brain development set the stage for the rest of your baby's life.*
- *Babies' brains are very soft. Shaking babies can damage their brains and cause blindness, deafness, mental retardation, or death.*

Waves, kicks, and squirms.
Place on firm mat or folded blanket on the floor to give baby time to practice kicking and moving his arms.

At times seems uncomfortable and gets fussy if left in one position for too long.
Play soft music and rock him or dance around with him to the rhythm of the music. Rock and talk or sing to him.

Sucks and swallows, turns toward finger, nipple, or bottle when cheek is touched.
Squeezes your finger in his palm.

Makes small, throaty noises, coos.
Cries when hungry, unhappy, or in pain.
Go to your baby when he cries. Check to see if he needs to be changed, fed, or held and cuddled. You won't spoil him by loving him and caring for him.

Needs comforting, cuddling, and handling.

Likes to be touched and talked to.
Handle baby just enough. Too much handling can make babies tense, too little can make them listless.

Have "conversations" with your baby. Even though he can't talk, he takes his turn in the conversation by moving or making faces.

Use diapering and bath time as a time to talk. Use gentle actions, smile, and provide things for him to hold, look at, and listen to.

Sudden loud noises may startle him and make him cry. He may look up to see who is talking.

Looks at faces.
Look at baby, and hold your face 5 - 18 inches away from his eyes.

Follows bright or colorful objects with his eyes.
Provide a variety of things for baby to look at, including interesting patterns such as checkerboards of light and dark colors, and things that move, such as mobiles.

- *Babies are born with over 100 billion brain cells and will not grow more of them. Each brain cell is connected to thousands of other brain cells.*
- *The experiences your baby has after he is born make more connections among brain cells. These connections help determine how your baby learns throughout his life.*
- *Your baby's brain is not a smaller version of an adult brain. It changes constantly as the baby has experiences with people and things.*
- *Holding, cuddling, and stroking your baby makes both of you feel good. These things are also needed for baby's healthy brain growth and development.*
- *Your baby's brain is "wired" to learn. Over the next ten years, it will be far more active than an adult's brain.*
- *Make sure he has lots of positive and interesting experiences.*

Tips AND THINGS TO WATCH FOR

- **If your baby is fussy, crying or won't settle down, try this: turn down the noise, turn down the lights, and become as calm as you can. Hold your baby and rock or walk. Sing or talk softly to him. Sometimes, wrapping a baby snuggly in a blanket helps to settle him.**
- **NEVER SHAKE A BABY as this can cause serious brain damage resulting in blindness, retardation, or even death.**
- **BACK TO SLEEP: Make sure you put your baby down on his or her back, on a firm mattress, to sleep.**
- **If your baby seems to have difficulty sucking or swallowing, talk to your clinic, nurse or doctor.**
- **Always use your baby's car seat when he is in the car, and make sure you have the straps on right. Be sure he is safe, secure and warm, and drive carefully if you travel on a snowmachine or in a boat. Always use life jackets for him and you when you are in a boat.**
- **If you are breastfeeding, avoid alcohol, drugs and cigarettes. Keep baby away from second-hand smoke.**
- **Check the batteries in the smoke detectors in your home. If you don't have smoke detectors, get them.**

IMMUNIZATION CHECK

Ask your clinic, nurse, or doctor if your child needs any immunizations (shots) at this time.

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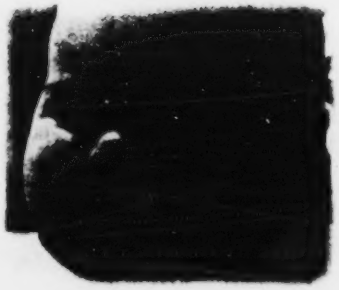
ONE TO THREE MONTHS



Baby smiles for the first time. She will smile over and over and over again. Her hearing is quite good. At first she will be startled by all sounds, later only new sounds will startle her. She seems to be exploring everything with her eyes, mouth, and hands, and reacts with lots of movement of her arms and legs. She needs to hear lots of language - reading, singing, and talking, and continues to develop her conversational skills.

Wobbly when supported in a sitting position.

Lifts head regularly when on tummy.
Talk to her - she'll pick up her head and listen. This helps her develop head control.

Put colorful toys in front of her so she sees them when she holds her head up.

Hold toys near her hand and encourage her to reach for them.

Learns to suck well, and coordinates sucking and breathing.

Moves arms and legs with better control of the movement.
After 6 weeks old, use bath time, or any quiet time, to gently move her arms and legs to strengthen her bending and stretching muscles.

Wiggles thumbs, opens and closes fist, watches her hands move. Sucks hand, thumb or fingers.

Watches people move.
Put your baby where she can watch people and their activities.

Recognizes family members or caregivers.

Smiles at anything that looks like a face.
Play peek-a-boo with your hands or a blanket or washcloth.

Stares at things or people for long periods of time.

Startles and cries at loud, sudden noises.

Stops moving and listens to new sounds.
Give her toys that make noise - bells, squeaky toys, and rattles.

Play soothing or interesting music.

Begins to recognize and respond to familiar sounds.
Read picture books, especially books with bright colors. Show the pictures to your baby, and talk about them. Reread the same books often so she can get used to the sounds of words.

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Makes sounds that sound like parts of words: "ah," "eh," "ih," "uh."

Makes sounds when it is her turn to "talk" in a conversation with you.
Talk to her in your home language if it is not English, as well as in English. If you can find them, read books in your home language to her. Or, talk to her in your home language about the pictures in picture books.

Uses different cries for different needs.

Notes On Brain Development

- *Make sure your baby has lots of opportunities to see, hear, taste, touch and smell different things so different parts of her brain develop and stay active.*
- *The brain cell connections that your baby develops while moving her head, arms, and legs now will help with later coordination and muscle control.*

Tips
AND THINGS TO WATCH FOR

- **BACK TO SLEEP: Make sure you put your baby down on his or her back, on a firm mattress, to sleep.**
- **NEVER SHAKE A BABY as this can cause serious brain damage resulting in blindness, deafness, retardation, or death.**
- **Hold your baby while she is being fed. A propped up bottle can cause drainage into her ears and damage her hearing. When she gets teeth, it can coat her teeth in milk or juice and make them get cavities or rot away. Hold, and snuggle your baby while you feed her.**
- **If your baby doesn't seem to hear your voice or other sounds, ask your clinic, nurse or doctor to check her hearing.**
- **Babies can learn the sounds of more than one language at once. Don't worry about confusing her if she hears more than one language from family members or caregivers. Hearing these sounds now will help her learn both languages later.**
- **If you are breastfeeding, avoid alcohol, drugs and cigarettes. Keep baby away from second-hand smoke.**

- *At this age, there is a lot of activity in the part of the baby's brain where vision is processed. Be sure she has lots of interesting things to look at.*
- *Ask your clinic, nurse or doctor to check her eyes. Some babies are born with eye problems that need to be fixed while they are still babies. Babies need to be able to see well so that the vision part of their brain can develop.*
- *When a baby hears something over and over again, she develops brain cell connections for that sound in the part of her brain where sound is processed. This is important for the sounds of language as well as other sounds.*
- *At three months, your baby can recognize several hundred spoken sounds -more than are in any one language. She will babble using "universal" baby sounds at this age. At one year old, she will babble using only the sounds made in the language or languages her family or caregivers speak. This babbling creates the brain connections that will help her learn her language or languages later.*

IMMUNIZATION CHECK

Ask your clinic, nurse, or doctor if your child needs any immunizations (shots) at this time.

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THREE TO SIX MONTHS

Your baby begins to laugh. He becomes ticklish. He plays with his fingers and toes, and puts them and other things in his mouth. He likes playing hide and find games and enjoys lots of attention.

Rolls from back to side, stomach to back, and back to stomach.
Place baby in different positions with space to move - in crib, on a blanket on the floor.

Sits with some support. Likes to be propped up to sit.
Hold baby in a sitting position. Prop him up with pillows so he can move his head and look around.

Notes On Brain Development

- *Your baby's brain is developing rapidly. New things to see, hear, touch, taste and smell helps different areas of the brain develop. Familiar routines, a safe home without violence, and adults who care for him support healthy development of the part of the brain that controls emotions and memory.*
- *The brains of babies who live in a secure, loving, safe environment develop in healthy ways that help them deal with anger and other emotions, and form healthy relationships as they grow up.*

Moves his arms and legs like he is swimming when he is on his tummy.

Tries to get you to keep playing games by making sounds or increasing his movements.

Uncovers an object that is partly hidden.
Partly hide toys under a blanket or washcloth so he can find them. Talk about what's happening in these games, "Oops, where did the teddy go?" "There it is! You found the teddy under the blanket."

Bats at objects and tries to grab them.
Give him toys that he can hold, toss, and bang together.

Smiles at himself in the mirror.
Hold baby in front of the mirror so he can see himself.

Discovers his own voice and likes to talk to himself after waking up, when eating, and while moving.
Give him time to practice making sounds on his own.

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Plays with sounds and makes sounds that almost sound like words: "ga," "buh," "da."

Listens and watches your mouth when you talk. Makes sounds back to communicate - like a conversation.
Read books and talk about things you show him. This helps him learn to listen, and to learn about language.

Tries to get attention, laughs, and responds to facial expressions.
Don't hurry when you feed, dress, or bathe your baby. This is a time to play, to build trust and feelings of security, and to show him you love him.

Smiles at the sound of a happy voice, cries or looks unhappy at the sound of an angry voice.
Make interesting faces and sounds. Click your tongue, make funny noises, play patty cake, say "uh-oh," "gonna get you," or other things you can use over and over.

Begins teething. May be fussy, drool more than usual, wake up at night crying, or rub his eyes, ears, or jaw.
Check for swollen or red gums. Give baby a cool, clean wet cloth, or a rubber teething ring to chew on.

- *This is still a very active time of development for the visual area of the brain.*
- *The part of the brain that controls emotions also controls long term memory. When babies have good experiences with books, they are building memories that will help them have good feelings about learning to read later on.*
- *Experiences that are very emotional - scary, hurtful, loving, happy - create strong memories.*
- *Hearing the same words over time helps babies develop brain cell connections for the sounds of the language.*
- *Researchers have new tools to see which areas of a baby's brain are developing at certain times. They have found that most types of brain development occur much earlier than was thought before.*

Tips AND THINGS TO WATCH FOR

- **Remember: NEVER SHAKE A BABY**
- **STOP BOTTLE MOUTH: If you give your baby a bottle to help him go to sleep, fill it with plain water. Don't use juice, milk, pop, or sugar water. All cause bottle mouth if the baby goes to sleep with the bottle.**
- **If you are breastfeeding, avoid cigarettes, drugs and alcohol. Keep baby away from second-hand smoke.**
- **If your child is unable to focus his eyes on things, has a wandering eye movement, or one or both eyes appear droopy or crossed, tell your clinic, nurse or doctor.**
- **If your baby has not made cooing or babbling sounds or suddenly quits babbling, tell your clinic, nurse or doctor.**
- **Make sure baby can't reach house plants, small objects that could be swallowed, or other things that could be harmful.**

IMMUNIZATION CHECK

Ask your clinic, nurse, or doctor if your child needs any immunizations (shots) at this time.

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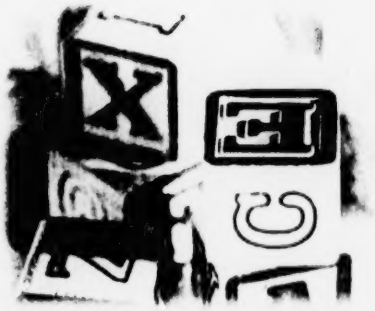
SIX TO NINE MONTHS



She's a listener! She turns her head, looks up, or tries to come when her name is called, moves around with arms for power, and tries to use her legs for crawling even if she isn't up on her knees yet. She's learning by reaching, holding, banging, passing objects from one hand to the other, and putting EVERYTHING in her mouth. She enjoys hearing and seeing new picture books, and responds when you reread familiar favorites.

Naps 1 - 4 hours a day.
Provide a quiet place for regular napping, about the same time every day.

Creeps, crawls, scoots or moves around in some way. Not all babies crawl, but most find a way to move around.
Put your baby in a safe, open place where she can practice rolling, rocking back and forth, pulling with her arms, kicking, and trying to crawl.

Look for and put away anything that might hurt her if she got it or pulled it down on herself.

Prefers to sit up rather than lie down when she is awake.
Help your baby learn to sit up. Gently push her over from the side so she can practice reaching out to balance herself.

Plays when lying on her side, cruises around in her crib, plays with her feet.

Understands a number of words, including "no" and "bye bye."

Makes movements, sounds, or facial expressions in response to other children's movements or sounds.

Pats her image in mirror. Recognizes others in mirror.
Spend time touching, playing and talking with your child in front of a mirror. Point to and name parts of her face while she watches in the mirror.

Makes babbling sounds such as "ma," "ga," "eheh," "baba," "googoo," "didi."
Play peek-a-boo, this little piggy, and patty-cake or similar games. Make funny sounds and say short rhymes and silly sayings.

Imitates cough, tongue clicking, bye-bye, hand clapping.

Uses different cries and babbles for hunger, anger, discomfort, pain.
Try to understand what her cries mean. Use simple words and phrases to describe her needs: "I know you're hungry," "Ow, that hurt!"

Notes On Brain Development

- *Most parts of the brain are actively developing during this period.*
- *Getting enough sleep is important for healthy brain development.*
- *The same part of the brain controls both the emotions and long term memory. A safe, loving home helps create positive memories and a good feeling about themselves, other people, and the world. These early memories can affect a person throughout her or his life.*

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May fuss if handed to people she doesn't know, or when her parents leave the room.
Hold her or let her stay by you and listen as you talk with new people. Be patient and calm if she is fussy. She will need time to watch and get used to new people in her own way.

Looks and listens when people talk. Looks up when people say her name. Looks at things you name or point at.
Hold her in your lap and read to her. Point to the pictures as you read.

Talk with your baby about what you are doing. Name objects and people.

- *It is very important for your baby to continue to learn how to have "conversations" with you. This helps babies develop language, thinking, and emotional connections.*
- *Happy, healthy moms and dads have a positive effect on their babies' brain development.*
- *The vision area of the brain is still very busy at this age.*
- *At 6 months, babies' brains have differences based on whether English, Spanish, Tlingit, Russian, Yupik, or other languages are spoken in their homes. If more than one language is spoken at home, the brain develops connections for each language.*
- *The more exposure an infant has to words, the faster she learns her language and builds her vocabulary.*

Tips AND THINGS TO WATCH FOR

- **Remember: NEVER SHAKE A BABY**
- **She is beginning to move around, and may roll, creep or fall off a bed or couch. Be sure there aren't things she can pull over on herself - lamps, carts, guns or gun racks, small tables, firewood, aquariums. Make sure that she can't get to the woodstove, heaters, or fans.**
- **If her head is still floppy at 9 months, if she seems to have difficulty moving it from side to side, or if she is not trying to sit, roll or creep, tell your clinic, nurse or doctor.**
- **This is a good age to check out your baby's mouth for new teeth, red gums, or decay. Ask your clinic, nurse, doctor, or dentist how to take care of your baby's new teeth as they come in.**
- **If you give your baby a bottle to help him go to sleep, fill it with plain water. Don't use juice, milk, pop, or sugar water. All cause bottle mouth if the baby goes to sleep with the bottle.**
- **Be sure that everyone in your home knows that keeping small toys and objects, and poisons, out of her reach is a life and death matter.**
- **If your child has not been doing many of the things listed so far, you should take her or him to the clinic, nurse or doctor for a check-up. Make a list of your concerns before you go. If you (baby's mom, dad, or caregiver) are feeling depressed, add this to your list of things to talk about with the clinic, nurse or doctor.**

IMMUNIZATION CHECK

Ask your clinic, nurse, or doctor if your child needs any immunizations (shots) at this time.

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NINE TO TWELVE MONTHS

He's an active explorer of his environment. He's into everything - pulls things out and spreads them around. When he's not busy moving things around, he learns by just staring at people, toys, pets, or events outside the window. This is a good time for you to name things and talk about what he's seeing in simple words and sentences.

Crawls, pulls himself up from kneeling to standing using one leg at a time and moves around holding onto furniture or someone's hand.

Provide safe areas for moving around and the falls that come with learning.

Make sure that tables and other things are stable so he can't pull them over onto himself. Block stairs with a gate. Take tablecloths off tables if he can reach them. Block off the woodstove.

Stops activity, frowns, or cries when adult says "no-no."

Attract his attention to an object, sound, or music to avoid having to say "no-no" as often.

Show your child what is okay to do.

When he gets into a "no-no," give him something else to do.

Gets other people to come to him by reaching out or making noises. Moves to music, smiles to show enjoyment.

Turns his head when his name is said.

Stops drooling.

Likes and dislikes some foods and may want to try to feed himself.

Allow him to hold his spoon for part of his meal.

Give him things he can pick up with his fingers for part of his meal.

Squeezes dolls or squeak toys to make noise, rolls balls, likes to play with paper and books, and things he can take apart and put back, like a box with a lid.

Let him see and play with simple mechanical things such as pop-up toys (jack in the box), plastic margarine or yogurt containers, things that open and close, boxes, and push toys.

Looks in the right place for a toy that rolls out of sight. Drops things just to watch them fall.

Play with your child by putting things in, under, or behind a box, blanket, or something else. Play "Uh-oh! Where did the (teddy, ball, shoe) go?"

Tries to name familiar objects when he sees them, points to body parts when you name them, may begin to say "uh-oh" "oops," or "no no."

As you do things or interact with others, clearly name and talk about the things and people: mommy, daddy, grandpa, puppy, shoe, ball, cookie, juice, etc. This helps him learn the names of people and things.

When reading favorite stories, point out and name pictures of characters, things and places.

If he tries to name something, say the name so he hears it. If he says "ba" you say, "yes, ball," if he says "pa," you say, "There's the puppy." If he hears these things in more than one language, it will help him learn both languages.

Picks things up and looks them over.

Puts fewer things in his mouth.

Pushes toy trains or cars around.

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Babbles and jabbers with many different sounds and tones of voice that sound like his family's language.

Says two unrelated syllables together, like "da-ba," or "ma-ba." May say his first words, "dada," "mama."

Notes On Brain Development

- *The planning and rehearsal part of the brain is very busy at this time. It is also connected to the emotions centers in the brain.*
- *Responding to your baby when he reaches for you strengthens his sense of security and attachment, both of which are critical to learning and emotional stability.*
- *Good nutrition is important to brain development. Make mealtimes enjoyable and provide a variety of nutritious foods.*
- *If a young child can't hear well, the areas of his brain that process sounds won't develop properly. He may have difficulty learning to speak and read. Be sure to have his hearing checked if you think he can't hear well.*
- *Opportunities to "mess around with stuff" - to move things around, and see what they do - has been shown to have a positive effect on brain growth.*

Tips AND THINGS TO WATCH FOR

- **If he still drools a lot, or if it is hard for him to close his lips on a cup or to take food from a spoon, tell your clinic, nurse or doctor.**
- **If he keeps his legs stiff when he pulls himself up to stand, or if he isn't trying to pull himself up, tell your clinic, nurse or doctor.**
- **If you give your baby a bottle to help him go to sleep, fill it with plain water. Don't use juice, milk, pop, or sugar water. All cause bottle mouth if the baby goes to sleep with the bottle.**
- **Remember to keep your baby's teeth clean. Ask the clinic, nurse, doctor, or dentist to show you how to clean them.**
- **Avoid foods that your baby might choke on or that might stick to his teeth: popcorn, nuts, hotdogs, grapes, raisins, hard or sticky candy.**
- **If you are breastfeeding, avoid alcohol, cigarettes, and drugs. Keep baby away from second-hand smoke.**
- **Remember: NEVER SHAKE A BABY**

IMMUNIZATION CHECK

Ask your clinic, nurse, or doctor if your child needs any immunizations (shots) at this time.

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TWELVE TO EIGHTEEN MONTHS

Your toddler looks, feels, puts things in and out of places, bangs, shakes, and tears things up. She spends lots of time practicing walking, climbing, scribbling, pulling and dumping things. She doesn't have the skill or attention span to pick everything up and put it away. She has favorite stories and books and wants to hear them over and over.

Learns to walk without help, sit down and get up again, kneel, and climb over, under, onto and into things.
Encourage her when she tries things - "good try," "oopsy," and "try again" encourage her to keep trying things.

Bends over to look through her legs. She will repeat this and other actions to get laughs or attention.

Throws a ball with two hands. Bends down to pick up items.
Give her soft balls or cloth blocks to throw and catch.

Uses both hands at once to hold and play with things.
Help her to develop muscles and coordination by giving her things to bang, throw, and squeeze.

Fix a drawer or low cupboard in the kitchen for her kitchen toys. She will play with plastic containers, things with lids, measuring cups, a cup and spoon, and pans with lids.

Points at pictures in familiar books. When you ask her to, she can point to things on the page.
Look at old magazines together and point out things she knows- babies, puppies, cookies, milk, books, teddies.

May bring favorite books to you to read.
Read to her every day, more than once a day when you can. Let her help hold the book and turn pages. Re-read her favorites often.

Uses crayons or markers for scribbling and pretend writing.
Give her writing and drawing materials.

Understands many words: milk, spoon, cup, blanket, bed, bottle, hat, teeth, nose, where is the_____, go get the___, show me, let's go, open/close.
When she tries to say something, help her by using the words back to her: "Oh, you want some milk," or "Yes, that's a doggy." This gives her a chance to hear the words she may be trying to say.

Acts without thinking, has trouble remembering rules, can't pay attention to one thing for long, would rather move around and handle things than sit still.
When you are reading to her and she gets restless, stop reading. Talk about the pictures and let her point to them. If she is still restless, let her do something else for a while.

Likes to stack blocks or other things.

Notes On Brain Development

- *Babies' brains are very active, creating new brain cell connections all the time. This activity slows down as babies get older, and when they are about 10 years old, the number of connections begins to decrease. Only the connections that the child still needs and uses are kept and the other connections fade away.*

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She may eat less, or refuse food at times.

Begins to figure out how to use a spoon and can hold a cup. Still a messy eater.

Naps 1 - 3 hours in the afternoon.

Likes routines in her day.
Try to have a routine for meals, naps, baths, cleaning her teeth, and bedtime. Include stories, conversation, and word play in these routines.

Wants to help adults with chores.
Let her help you with chores by giving her a little thing to do- carrying something, picking things up, putting her toys in the toy box.

Pats at pictures and helps turn pages in a storybook.
Reading a storybook to her for a few minutes when she goes to bed is a good routine to start while she is young.

Tips AND THINGS TO WATCH FOR

- **If your baby isn't walking by herself at 15 months, tell your clinic, nurse or doctor.**
- **Speech and language development may seem to slow down while she is learning to walk.**
- **Keep doors, cabinets, and electrical outlets secure with childproof devices. Block off woodstoves, heaters, and fans.**
- **Never leave your baby unattended in the bath or anywhere near water, including large puddles.**
- **Remember: NEVER SHAKE A CHILD**

Jabbers, and imitates words and sounds. Tries to tell you her feelings. Can say a few words.
Remember to talk with her as you do things throughout the day. When you are washing her or giving her a bath, you can help her learn the names of her body parts by naming them as you wash. When she is getting dressed, name the pieces of clothing as you put them on her. She is learning new words all the time.

Follows simple one-step directions: sit down, stand up, bring it to me, put it down.

Lets you know what she wants by making sounds, pointing, tugging on you or asking.

Lets you know what she doesn't want by shrugging away, shaking her head.

Gives hugs and kisses to family.

Points to herself or others when asked, "Where's _____?"

Enjoys playing in water.

Helps with dressing herself.

IMMUNIZATION CHECK

Ask your clinic, nurse, or doctor if your child needs any immunizations (shots) at this time.

- *Safe homes and loving adults help babies develop brain cell connections that allow them to grow up feeling secure, positive about themselves and the world, and able to control themselves and their emotions. These connections help them solve problems and cope well with difficulties.*
- *The parts of the brain that control vision, problem solving, planning, and emotions are very active at this age. Your baby is busy figuring out how to control her emotions and how to make things happen in her world.*
- *The part of the brain that is involved with making sounds and controlling the mouth and tongue to help create these sounds also is involved with problem solving and thinking. Encouraging your baby to practice making sounds may help her develop thinking skills later.*
- *Moving around in a variety of ways can help babies develop brain cell connections for coordination and muscle control.*

EIGHTEEN TO TWENTY-FOUR MONTHS

This is a very active time for a toddler. Parents may not be used to all this energy and movement. He will get into everything, act quickly, and move from one thing to another to satisfy his curiosity for touching, listening to, and seeing everything in his environment. He wants to try to do everything you do.

Moves, pushes, pulls and rides on toys without pedals, large toys, cardboard boxes.
Provide 4 wheel carts or wagons for him to sit in and move. Allow space for jumping or bouncing onto soft cushions.

Enjoys rough and tumble play. Plays best next to rather than with other children.
Set aside time and a place for him to explore and play independently.

Will be very active, then voluntarily relax for brief periods before his next burst of energy.
Recognize and encourage his new physical skills as he practices balance and coordination.

Likes to dance and move to music.
Play a variety of kinds of music and encourage him to move to it's rhythm.

Shows jealousy of attention given to others, especially other family members.

Desires to control others - disagrees, orders, has tantrums if things go wrong.
Redirect his attention when he gets into things he shouldn't have.

Often says "no" to bedtime, certain foods, and simple requests. Delays sleep by demanding things.
Provide choices: "banana or cracker?" "the farm book or the bear book?" to give him a sense of control and choice.

Be consistent in setting limits.

Gives up the bottle and drinks from cup.

Knows the difference between food and things that aren't made to eat.

Hands empty dish to adult, unwraps loosely wrapped food.
Give your child a child-sized spoon and cup. Provide him with a variety of foods and limit sweets and high-fat foods. Be patient if he spills things.

Names pictures, attempts to sing songs or say rhymes, listens to story for at least five minutes. Can point to 3 or 4 body parts on request.
Sing songs, say rhymes, and play word games throughout the day.

Likes to help turn pages.
Make time for reading picture books - 2 or 3 times a day if possible.

Plays with toy or other object for at least 5 minutes without breaking it. Enjoys play with common household items.
Show your toddler how things work and describe them to him: bathtub plugs "go in the hole and keep the water in," refrigerators "keep milk cold" and coats "keep us warm."

Turns knobs on wind-up toys, recognizes self and family members in photographs, can put circles and square pieces into easy puzzles.
Make sure your child has some things of his own and a place to keep them.

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TWO TO THREE YEARS

This is a time of becoming independent yet wanting to be held, cuddled and cared for by you. Your toddler may find it of great importance to be in charge, or have a temper tantrum. She'll explore and try to gain some control of the world around her. Her vocabulary will grow at an amazing rate - but still not fast enough to keep her from becoming frustrated when you don't understand her.

Can walk on tiptoes, runs well, avoids obstacles, can jump up and down, climb a small ladder, and begins to use the pedals on a tricycle.
Plan time to play outside or at playgrounds to allow your child to run and climb and play on things.

May show some interest in the toilet.

Napping may decrease, but she will still have restless, tired periods.
If your child no longer naps, continue to provide a quiet resting time and make sure she has sturdy books to look at while she rests.

Participates in dressing herself.

Objects to changes in daily routines.

Behavior seems to go from one extreme to the other. May have tantrums.
Set clear limits and be consistent - this helps your child feel more secure. She is not able to listen to long explanations about why she can't do things. Keep your words brief and show her what is okay and what isn't with your expressions, simple words of praise or correction, and encouraging touches.

Can sing parts of songs, say her first name, and repeat parts of nursery rhymes or finger plays.

Enjoys word games, rhymes, and songs that involve actions.

Answers simple what and where questions.
Talk about things that happen during the day, things you did together, and what will be happening.

Uses "why" questions to keep a conversation going.

Enjoys listening to stories for 5 to 10 minutes at a time.
Read to her and also find times when you can read your book and she can "read" hers. Plan times when the whole family reads silently for a few minutes.

Take trips to the library for books, records, and to participate in storytimes.

Make up stories with her and her toys or family pets as characters.

Tips
AND THINGS TO WATCH FOR

- **Be aware that your child will repeat certain actions or activities time and again until he "gets it" - opening cupboard doors, bouncing a ball, turning pages in a magazine, pouring, scooping, and just "messing around" with stuff.**
- **Your child will enjoy movement. However, if he doesn't' play with toys or other people and frequently prefers to spin or rock back and forth, walks only on his tiptoes, or bangs his head repeatedly, tell your clinic, nurse or doctor.**
- **If your child hasn't said a few words by the time he or she is 2, tell your clinic, nurse or doctor.**
- **Be sure your child is in a car seat when riding in the car, and that he is safe and secure when riding in boats or on snowmachines.**
- **Remember: NEVER SHAKE A CHILD**

IMMUNIZATION CHECK

Ask your clinic, nurse, or doctor if your child needs any immunizations (shots) at this time.

Partially washes and dries hands.
Let him practice washing his hands, feeding himself, unwrapping things.

Uses intelligible words over half the time. Has approximately 50 words by age 2 and combines 2 - 4 words into simple phrases.
Talk about what he and you are doing and encourage him to try new things.

Tells experiences, makes requests, and asks and answers questions using "baby talk" - "Where kitty?" "Go bye-bye," "more cookie," "ah gone," "my mommy."
As you talk with your toddler, name actions and objects, describe things as they happen, ask him questions he can answer with one or two words or combination of words and actions.

Plan time and space for water and sand play with a variety of containers, cups, bottles, things that float and that sink. Let him scoop, pour and dig.

Provide balls of different shapes and sizes; play "roll and catch" with him.

Begins interest in pretend play: putting dolly to bed, pouring juice, making pretend phone calls.
Provide things your child can use in pretend play - unbreakable household items work fine.

Notes On Brain Development

- *Researchers have found music and music lessons help young children's brains develop.*
- *Children need to have lots of experiences with people and things, and lots of positive attention from adults. This helps their brains develop and gives them opportunities to learn about their world.*
- *Babies are born with their own unique brain, but their ability to learn and get along in the world can be helped by their early experiences in a safe, loving home.*
- *Activity in the part of the brain which processes hearing and speech increases at this age. Talking with your toddler supports this development.*
- *The areas of the brain that process information from the senses - sight, hearing, touch, taste, smell - and movement, continue to develop rapidly. Lots of experiences, "messing around with stuff" and experimenting with his own movements supports this development.*

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Plays with other children for short periods of time. There is little sharing of toys.

Uses 200 or more words and 2 or 3 word sentences. Understands from 500 to 900 words.

Plan daily walks, trips to the park, store, or library. Your child will learn more and more each time you repeat these experiences and talk about them.

Listen to and talk with your child in simple sentences and direct words. Avoid rushing her when she is speaking. Answer the endless questions she has with simple, clear answers.

Experiments with talking, and may become frustrated if misunderstood.

If you don't understand, say, "Show me," or stoop down to her level and say, "I didn't hear you, now tell me."

Tips AND THINGS TO WATCH FOR

- **This chart is only a guideline. Children develop in many different ways. But, if your child is not doing many of the things listed in this chart, report this to your clinic, nurse or doctor. Keep a list of your concerns so you don't forget anything.**
- **If you haven't already taken your child to the clinic, nurse, or doctor for a general physical and to have his or her ears and eyes tested, this is a good time to do it.**
- **Remember: NEVER SHAKE A CHILD**

Knows the meaning of "in," "on," and "under," and can point to things that are "big" and "little."

Do action songs and games that help her learn her body parts, up and down, over and under, around and behind.

Scribbling starts to look more like writing.

Matches colored objects, can point to more than 5 body parts, fills and empties boxes and pails repeatedly during sand or water play.

Have her choose the cup that is the same color as her shirt or the crayon that is the same color as her favorite toy.

When you play with your child, ask and tell how things feel: soft, furry, cold. Point to, name and describe things that are in/out, big/little, dirty/clean, etc.

IMMUNIZATION CHECK

Ask your clinic, nurse, or doctor if your child needs any immunizations (shots) at this time.

Notes On Brain Development

- *By the age of three, babies' brains weigh three times as much as they did at birth, and are twice as active as adult brains.*
- *Studies have shown that a home environment rich in language, sensory experiences, and caring adults supports brain development for all children.*
- *Young children still need to be held and cuddled.*
- *Developing strong connections among the hearing, speaking, emotion, vision, memory, and language centers of the brain provides a solid base for later literacy development. Talking, singing, rhyming games, playing with the sounds of words, and reading and rereading favorite stories provides the experiences that build these connections in the brain.*
- *All areas of your child's brain are very active at this age. The vision, hearing, speech and language, touch, planning, rehearsing, emotions, critical thinking and problem solving parts of the brain are all active. The first three years of brain development set the stage for the rest of her life.*

THREE TO FOUR YEARS

What a personality! So pleased with what he can do and always willing to show off new abilities. He can stay with one activity for almost 10 minutes. His vocabulary grows to about 1000 words. He begins to share and take turns, and is becoming more independent with going to the bathroom, eating, and dressing.

Crawls through tunnels, balances for five seconds on one foot, sits with feet crossed at ankle, can hang on and balance on swing, pushes and lifts objects of moderate weight, uses two arms to catch and toss a ball.

Play games such as hide and seek. Provide a safe place for active kicking, running, and rolling on the floor or ground. Trips to playgrounds or parks provide challenges and opportunities to play with other children.

Can pick up one inch objects and put them in small-mouthed containers, builds block towers, enjoys simple wood puzzles and matching cards.

Provide a variety of materials and time to use them in a specific area – clay, play-dough, paper to tear and glue, 3 - 5 piece puzzles, books with action pictures, crayons, markers, and unlined paper for drawing and pretend writing.

Adjusts to new situations and people with explanation and/or the time to anticipate what is happening next.

Help prepare your child for new events by talking about what comes next. Prepare for major events by talking, practicing, and planning together. Be brief, clear and reassuring.

Will attend to a story or single activity for more than 5 - 15 minutes.

Retells parts of familiar stories, tries to follow printed words during storytime.

Read stories, sing songs, recite poems, talk as you do tasks or ride in the car. Expand and react to what your child says. Encourage him to tell about his activities or things he has drawn. Write down what your child says on his drawings or paper to make a book.

Capable of responding to commands involving 3 actions: "Stand up, jump, and clap your hands."

Uses 800 - 1500 words, comprehends over 2000.

Show him the letters in his name and use alphabet magnets or blocks to spell out his name and other words.

Listens carefully to each word; knows and uses opposites and descriptions: "dog big," "little car," "Bobby sad," and uses positional words with accuracy: in, on top, behind, off.

Asks many questions, uses 4 or more word sentences, recites nursery rhymes, can whisper.

Answer his questions quickly, using simple details.

Can draw circles, crosses, and some letters and enjoys writing letter-like symbols on paper.

Provide time for tracing in sand, salt, or fingerpaint, and to use crayons, markers, brushes and pencils.

Counts 3 objects, points to each; knows front and back; recognizes and names at least one color.

Respond to questions about what is written on signs as you drive or walk. Use books that have clear print and a few words or sentences on each page. Encourage your child to retell and/or follow your reading with his eyes. Point to words as you read, and talk about letters, sounds, and words. Make sure your child has picture books, storybooks, nursery rhyme and alphabet books, poetry, fantasy, and books about real life.

Seeks attention and approval, boasts of what he can do. Follows rules by imitating actions of other children.

If you can't attend to him, let him know that you will in a few minutes, and then carry through. This helps him learn to wait and builds trust.

Spend some time with just the two of you. Describe your feelings and show him by your actions how to deal with his. Show and tell him what he can do, not just what he can't do.

Suggests turn-taking, but is often bossy toward others.

Is starting to play cooperatively with one or two other children, but still enjoys playing alone. Needs less adult help in solving conflicts with other children.

Provide times for him to play with other children: dress up, sand and water play, and puppet play.

Tips AND THINGS TO WATCH FOR

- **Children develop individual preferences - some are better at climbing and jumping while others are better at drawing and singing. But children should have and tolerate a wide variety of experiences. If you think your child is clumsy, falls a lot or loses his balance, doesn't talk or play with others or enjoy movement - you may want to have him checked by your clinic, nurse or doctor.**
- **Remember: NEVER SHAKE A CHILD**

IMMUNIZATION CHECK

Ask your clinic, nurse, or doctor if your child needs any immunizations (shots) at this time.

Notes On Brain Development

- *Researchers have shown that the environment is not a neutral place. A child's experiences in his environment affect the physical development of his brain and the connections within the brain. This brain development affects his capacity for learning, emotional attachment, social skills, and personality throughout his life. Rich, complex environments support brain development.*
- *A rich, complex environment is one which includes the following:*
  - *positive emotional support and one or more caring adults*
  - *variety in things to see, hear, touch, smell, and taste - sensory stimulation*
  - *challenging activities that are neither too easy (boring) nor too hard (stressful and frustrating)*
  - *provides opportunities for interaction with adults and other children*
  - *considers all areas of the child's development - physical, mental, emotional, social, and aesthetic*
  - *provides choices and opportunities to plan activities, and*
  - *encourages active participation.*
- *Emotions play an important role in learning - remember the same area of the brain is the center of both emotion and long term memory. Forcing a child to sit for too long, do repetitive or boring tasks, or try things that are too difficult and cause frustration make it hard for him to learn. It also may create long term memories that interfere with later learning.*
- *The brain is, by nature, curious, and tries to make meaning of the world. Opportunities to make connections between what is new and what is known support learning. When you talk together about stories and things in them that are like things in his life, or let him retell favorite parts of a story you are helping build these connections.*

FOUR TO FIVE YEARS

She asks MANY questions and is more interested in how answers fit her own thoughts than in the explanation. She enjoys and takes pride in planning and making decisions with the family. She likes to tell and make up stories, paint, cut and paste. She is learning colors, numbers, letters, letter sounds, and how to dress and use the toilet by herself.

Walks and runs well, maintaining balance when quickly changing direction and speed, does somersaults and rolls, begins to skip or hop, seeks many challenges on playground equipment.

Take her to parks and playgrounds so she can safely develop her climbing, swinging, and running skills and play with other children.

Dresses completely, zips, buttons, ties shoe laces, combs hair.

Praise her for her attempts to be independent even if she buttons unevenly or her colors don't match.

Washes face and hands without help.

Can use the toilet by herself.

Serves herself at the table, uses fork, spoon, and sometimes a knife.

Still needs routines and adequate sleep.

Set up a routine for your child to care for herself and her home by giving her simple chores. Let her pick out the clothes she wants to wear for the day.

Understands that words can have more than one meaning – duck can mean "look out" or it can be a kind of bird.

Matches and names colors, shapes (circles, squares, triangles); can give or take up to 5 of something; gains familiarity with letters, numbers, colors, and words.

Point out and name colors as she sees them. Use colored objects and name them by color -green cup, blue dress.

Play matching, counting, and word games like "Go Fish," lotto or child's bingo. She will be listening, following rules, counting, matching, and thinking.

Scribbles and attempts to write own name and other words. Is interested in what letters, numbers, and words say. May begin using known letters to try to spell words.

Read and talk about the letters and words she sees on food labels, street signs, in books, and in names.

Encourage her interest in drawing and writing activities. Show her how her name looks when printed. Only capitalize the first letter of her name. Praise her attempts to copy and write it.

Plays with other children and can agree to rules for games. Likes to sing, dance, and act. Shows more independence, may visit neighbors by herself.

Prefers to play in small groups of 2 or 3 children.

Help her learn to get along with others by the way you deal with her and others in the family.

Tips AND THINGS TO WATCH FOR

- **Make sure your child learns how to use the regular seat belt in the car as soon as she or he is old enough and big enough to quit using the child car seat. Always check to be sure he or she is belted in correctly before driving.**
- **Remember: NEVER SHAKE A CHILD**

IMMUNIZATION CHECK

Ask your clinic, nurse, or doctor if your child needs any immunizations (shots) at this time.

Begins to explain her behavior rather than lose control. Obeys rules if she knows them in advance.

Develops more of an understanding of time such as "yesterday," "tomorrow," "next summer," and "when you go to school." She can recall events and facts, sort objects by type, size, or color, and tell what is missing from a set of familiar objects.

Help her anticipate what comes next and what to expect. Tell her a few minutes before she needs to put her toys away. Show her how to tell when it is bedtime by the hands on the clock.

Tells longer stories; uses full sentences; says name and address. Asks what words mean; asks lots of why, what, how, and when questions.

Talk about events and activities; talk about things as being first, next, last. Express your thoughts and feelings, allowing time to listen to hers, too. Use humor and show enjoyment when talking with her. Answer her questions, and ask questions she can answer.

Go to the library to get books and to enjoy storytimes.

Be sure she sees other family members reading, writing, and enjoying books. Turn off the TV for a quiet family reading time each day. Read aloud to her at least once a day.

Can carry out a series of 3 requests "Move the trike, close the door, and bring the book."

Enjoys and can participate in rhyming games. Can tell if words rhyme or not.

Says numbers from 1 - 10.

Have fun with numbers and counting. Count out spoons for dessert, read numbers on people's houses, count things when driving or walking - blue cars, yellow signs, brown dogs.

Refer to the clock and talk about times. Draw times for getting up, meals, etc., and encourage her to use the clock.

Notes On Brain Development

- *Help protect your child from brain injury by making sure she wears a helmet when riding a bicycle, a seat belt when riding in a car, and avoids unsafe play areas.*
- *Long-term memories are strengthened during sleep as the brain uses this time to reconstruct the connections and networks related to the experiences of the day. Too little sleep may interfere with this memory process, as well as resulting in a cranky or whiny child.*
- *Caring adults and a safe and loving environment help children overcome many other difficulties and promote brain development at any age.*
- *Young children are "wired" to learn language. Children who learn languages as young children speak them without a noticeable accent. Adolescents and adults rarely learn a second language as well as a young child can.*
- *Brain development is constant and rapid from birth to the age of 10. There are many critical periods for development of specific skills and abilities - vision, language, motor skills, social skills, and emotional attachments.*

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

EMERGENCY: _____

CLINIC: _____

DOCTOR: _____

HOSPITAL: _____

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